MEMORIAL
OF
REV. WILLIAM W. PHILLIPS D.D.

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Memorial of Rev. William W. Phillips, D.D.

W. W. Phillips

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

FIFTH AVENUE, N. Y.

MAR 4 1954

MEMORIAL

OF

REV. WILLIAM W. PHILLIPS, D. D.

PRINTED BY REQUEST OF THE SESSION, AND OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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FUNERAL OF THE LATE DR. PHILLIPS.

The funeral services of the late William W. Phillips, D. D., were held in the First Presbyterian Church, Fifth Avenue, on Thursday, 23d inst., at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and were attended by a large concourse of friends—hundreds being unable to obtain admission to the church.

A striking feature of the occasion was the presence of so large a number of clergymen, of all evangelical denominations, who came from far and near to evince their respect and affection for the memory of their departed brother in the ministry.

The services were conducted by

Rev. Dr. Spring,	Rev. Dr. Krebs,
" " Plumer,	" " Dickinson,
" " Ferris,	" " Thompson.

The pall-bearers were

Rev. Dr. Vinton,	Rev. Dr. Dewitt,
" " Shedd,	" " Adams,
" " Somers,	" " Rice,
" " Vermilye,	" " Campbell.

Dr. Krebs delivered the address, giving a sketch of the life and character of the deceased; and was followed by Dr. Plumer in a few touching remarks.

The impressive services, the sombre drapery, the manifest sorrow of those

who were taking their final leave of the remains of him who had baptized their infants, married their young men and maidens, visited their sick, and buried their dead; the beautiful rendering of the hymns (favorites of the deceased) commencing

"There is a fountain filled with blood,"

and

"How blest the righteous when he dies;"

the tolling of the bell as the mournful procession passed from the late residence of the deceased to the church; presented a scene so truly solemn and affecting as will scarcely be effaced from the memory of any of its observers.

"Thus passed forever from our view
The noble, faithful, pious, true;
But from our hearts and mem'ries never
Can we his name or virtues sever."

ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF

REV. DR. PHILLIPS,

MARCH 23d, 1865,

BY

REV. JOHN M. KREBS, D. D.,

AND

REV. WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D. D.

ADDRESS OF REV. DR. KREBS.

There is a stricken household—there is a stricken church. There are many hearts bleeding this day—and many anxieties and sympathies awakened by the blow which has prostrated a standard-bearer on the high places of the field, and bereaved so large a portion of the church of God in this city and this land. And I too—may I not say it?—have lost a friend, a counsellor, a brother—one in whom I trusted with unbounded confidence—whose kind and almost parental regard and unobtrusive condescensions I have enjoyed during my whole ministry—in experiences and trials, in intimacies and confidences in eventful times, and in personal concerns of the heart and soul.

I have hardly dared to trust myself to speak on the present occasion. It is not so difficult to speak in eulogy of the honored dead: nor is it unmeet that I should fulfil the office that grows out of official and personal relations,—while as the last of his co-presbyters who conversed with him or saw him living, there is some fitness in my compliance with the request which for such a service has the force of a command.

But I cannot help feeling—as amid other and similar and recent solemnities—which have crowded upon the tenderest recollections and affections of these churches and ministers—that God Himself is speaking to us with the voice of His providence—and of His rod—with a startling and almost appalling eloquence—that bids us "be still and know that He is God." The occasion itself is more affecting and impressive to the hearts that gather here to the burial of a man of God than any words of man can be. When that majestic form, which now lies prostrate here, moved among you, and appeared in this pulpit, you felt the power of His *presence*—the force of all his excellent natural endowments of person, as well as of mind—that seemed to make his words more imposing, while these endowments were really aided and employed, as they were sanctified by all those excellent gifts and graces, which the Spirit of God superinduced upon them, to make him a minister, a witness, and an example of that grace and truth which are in Jesus: and you felt that his words were weighty and powerful. But was there ever aught of solemn admonition that spoke from those eloquent lips like this, his last and most impressive sermon—these mute appeals of these sombre draperies, this gathering of mourners, these bowed hearts—and amid all and above all—this eloquent majesty of death? May it not be said, with no inappropriate application, that "he being dead yet speaketh"—and now once more, most solemnly of all, to

bid you remember the word which he spake while he was yet with you?

The rapid changes since my own accession to the ministry in this city have removed the fathers who received and inducted me when I came among them in the dew of my youth. The most of those venerable men are dead. In the Presbytery *one* only survives in the pastoral office; in our Presbyterian churches here, only *two;* and in all the denominations only *three.* Within the last ten months the Presbytery has lost from these conspicuous places *six* of its members—*four* of them among the most eminent and of prolonged usefulness—men of mark—men revered—and we who stand here are admonished to-day that we too are going the way of all the earth. Well may we exclaim—"The *fathers*, where are they? and the *prophets*, do they live forever?"

But the memory of their ministrations remains, and of the oppositions of unbelief, and the fruits of repentance and faith, and the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. And all the effects of their ministry survive—both in them to whom they were the savor of death unto death, and in them to whom they were the savor of life unto life. But they are gone—to meet with their hearers again at the bar of God, and to give in their account —of some with joy—of others with grief—and all of them to test the truth of what these prophets believed and preached.

The treasure was put into earthen vessels—the waters of life were put into earthen pitchers. And these are broken—although the treasures and the waters were not lost. But the season is short—for us—and for you also who hear us.

If this truth were felt, as its solemnity and impressiveness ought to be felt—what preachers should we be—what hearers would you be! What an influence and force would be conveyed by every sermon! What scenes of spiritual interest would our worshipping assemblies present! What pains of conviction—what anxiety to be saved—what holy travailing of the new birth—what joy and peace in believing—what thronging crowds in the sanctuary—what hopes of salvation—what fitness for living, and fitness for dying too—what comforts and consolations abounding by Christ—and what looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God—and what praises and services of the glory of our God and of His Christ!

And if for the moment we weep and mourn, because His servants do not continue by reason of death, and are taken away from our fond hearts and longing hopes for the church of God and her wide field in a dying world wherein her prayer and service for Christ and souls are to be employed—we are not to forget all that God accomplished by them—nor that Jesus Christ is still Head over all things for the church—and that He will be with her alway to the end of the world. He is the same

yesterday, to-day, and forever—His glorious person, and covenant, and atoning blood—His power and love and faithfulness —His compassion and care—His mediation and intercession— His promises and His truth. He has the residue of the Spirit —He will not leave you comfortless—He will raise up laborers for the harvest—and in their generations He shall have a seed to serve Him—and other ministers and martyrdoms, it may be, to testify to the ages to come the glorious gospel of the blessed God—to comfort His people—and to build up His church. Zion is engraved on the palms of His hands: her walls continually rise before Him.

But it becomes the occasion to attempt, yet with no particular care to be methodical, some humble and merely suggestive memorial of the life and character of our departed friend and brother and father. We are commanded to remember those who have had the rule over us, who have spoken to us the word of God— and to follow their faith, considering the end of their conversation.

William Wirt Phillips was born in Montgomery County, in this state, on September 23d, 1796. From his early childhood he was of a thoughtful and religious turn of mind, and he grew up in singular purity and uprightness. Often, in after years, he adverted, with pious thankfulness, to the goodness of God in preserving him from the sins of youth. Early led to

recognize Christ and embrace Him as his Saviour, he confessed Him before men in claiming union with His church, shortly after graduating as a Bachelor of Arts of Union College, and while he was yet under twenty years of age. Entering the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed Church in this city, under the care of the late Dr. John M. Mason, and afterward the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Dutch Church at New Brunswick, he was contemporary in his studies under that distinguished teacher and preacher, with many who have become eminent ministers of the gospel. After prosecuting a very full course of study, he was, in April, 1818, ordained as pastor of the church then in Pearl street, but now merged in the Central Church in Broome street; and in that church he continued a most acceptable and useful ministry for about eight years, when he was translated to the First Presbyterian Church, then worshipping in Wall street: and therein, and, after the removal of the church edifice and the erection of this church, in this place, he exercised his pastoral office for thirty-nine years—his whole ministerial life occupying a period of forty-seven years—until now he has finished his course with joy, and the ministry which he received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And ye are witnesses how holily and unblameably he behaved himself among you, and exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye

would walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

While as a pastor he devoted himself to the edification of his especial charge, he was called to the performance of other public trusts, to the duties of which he attended with great fidelity and skill, and with great acceptance. *Ex officio*, he was, by the terms of their respective foundations, a trustee of the Leake and Watts Orphan Asylum and of the Sailor's Snug Harbor—posts requiring no little time and labor. He was also a trustee of the College of New Jersey (Nassau Hall), at Princeton, and a member of the Council of the New York University; and he was both a trustee and a director of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, and President of the latter Board: and always in his place. Besides being repeatedly elected a member of the several other Boards of the Presbyterian Church, he was, from its organization in 1837, the chairman of the executive committee of the Board of Foreign Missions, and, for several years past, President of the Board also. Every week found him in his place in that committee, wherein he made himself thoroughly familiar with its operations, the condition of its missions, and the name, character, and work of every missionary; and in every way he showed himself an earnest and sagacious friend and promoter of that great cause. He was frequently a member of the General Assembly, and in 1835 was its Moderator. These positions

evinced in what repute he was, in the church at large and with his brethren. And thus was laid upon him in a measure the care of all the churches, involving an amount of service of which few men are capable. These were not barren honors, but severe labors. Nor was this service any detriment to his parochial charge. Neither he nor his people regarded it with churlish jealousy or narrow and selfish regard to its isolated interests; but by his public spirit, which was shared by his people, was illustrated the duty of looking not upon their own things, but also upon the things of others, and the advantage to be gained by enlarged views and all the reflex influence and reciprocal benefit which a pastor and man of public spirit confers at once upon the whole church and upon the particular field from whence he dates his enlarged enterprise.

The degree of D. D. was conferred upon him by Columbia College, when he was yet under thirty years of age.

None would shrink more than he from the eulogy or mention of himself. But shall *we* not bear testimony to the grace of God which was with him?

He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. He walked with God daily. Eminently a man of prayer, his household knew why his resort in the early morning was to his study; and when, under the pains of his last sickness, he stood

leaning over his study-desk, or sat in his chair with closed eyes and barely moving lips, they knew that he was communing with God. And herein lay in part the secret of that remarkable ability, copiousness, and unction of his public prayers in the sanctuary—so full, so appropriate, so fervent, that one of another preference said that if all ministers prayed like him there would be no need of a liturgy—and that might be said of him which the late Dr. James W. Alexander once remarked to me concerning Dr. Milledoler, that "he was given to the church to teach ministers how to pray." He *was* a good man. Men felt it, and "how awful goodness is;" as one said, who mingled much with public men and great men in political circles, that he was always unusually moved with "a certain awe," when he was in the presence and company of this true man of God.

For the past two years he was more evidently ripening for heaven. The finer points of his character were *more* apparent: his patience, meekness, tenderness, love, spirituality, upward affection, the characteristics of his pure and lovely life, were brought out more and more.

With that great strong form—so firmly knit, and framed for endurance—he was, nevertheless, the subject of great bodily suffering, which was not generally known; but he complained not—nor murmured, nor proclaimed it abroad; but he bore it with sustained spirit—and its influence was observable upon him

as it helped to purify his character, and even helped him in his work. Obliged to write standing—unable to sit down—he would sometimes say: "Oh, if my people knew what suffering it costs me to prepare for their instruction, they would surely appreciate more this painful labor for them, and make a better improvement of the truth." And it was to him a regret that his infirmity rendered him unable to visit them at their own houses as often as he would. So excruciating was this anguish at times, especially toward the last, that after a severe paroxysm, he said: "I thought I had endured all that poor human nature could bear: but God has shown me that there are greater extremes:—and I am a wonder to myself, to suffer as I do, and yet live." And yet, with all this, under complicated agony, there was no impeachment of God—no bitter outcry. "It was all right: God had a good purpose in it: His will be done."

Thus to the last, so meekly bore he his Master's will. As the end drew nigh, he did not fail to apprehend its approach. Methodically exact, he had set his house in order, in his temporal as well as in his spiritual concerns. He spoke of the probable event—not as terminating his life, but as closing up his work. He was simply, beautifully calm. He knew whom he had believed. His mind, unclouded till the last few hours, showed its unfaltering trust. Without speaking of himself, his conversation was in heaven, and implied more than he said. When told of

a certain person who was suffering much from excessive bodily pain, and was, at the same time, oppressed with spiritual doubts and fears, he said: "I pity him, to have to bear that double burden—anguish of body and a wounded spirit too, troubled with the temptations of the adversary taking advantage of his weakness." When, in my last interview with him, while he could still converse, I spoke with a grateful remembrance of his kind counsels in times of trouble, and especially of the comfort I had derived from his last sermon in my hearing,—as if to ward off any seeming tribute to himself, he replied: "Give God the praise: it is He who makes use of us; and all our fitness to aid one another is from Him."

He showed piety at home. His household fondly revered and loved him. To his children he was more like their elder brother. He made them his companions,—talked with them and taught them, while he counselled with them, and shared their studies and plans and recreations, and governed them with the power of his loving sympathies.

He was very much attached to his own people, and they in turn to him. They were kept together against the adverse influences of changing population by the force of their love for his person and ministry. To the poor he relieved—the children he instructed—the afflicted he comforted, he was greatly endeared. His people had all confidence in his integrity and sound judgment,

and they coöperated with him without question or reluctance in the plans he formed for developing the energies of the church and promoting its prosperity and usefulness, and the widest influence of his ministry among them; so that they were singularly accordant, peaceful, and happy in each other. His church was indeed his family. There he spoke with all freedom and simplicity; adverse to the advertisement of his sermons, or reports of them, because he would not have that free, familiar discourse as with his own household impaired by the thought of the press, or by mingling with it an ambitious style and sensational themes, or by truckling for celebrity and the applause of the platform. In early life, he had, according to the custom of some, kept a journal—which, however, he destroyed, because he feared the record which might fall under the eyes of others, should extenuate or exaggerate the truth of his own experiences for posthumous admiration.

An humble-minded, modest man was he—simple and sincere and confiding, cheerful of temper, but grave and dignified. His retiring, unobtrusive disposition caused some persons to charge him with being cold, reserved, unsocial, and proud. They knew him not. None cherished profounder views of his own unworthiness and obligations to grace: none more tender, affectionate, and sympathizing. He was ever ready to help his brethren,—to take pains to help them, never excusing himself from the

service. Ever ready too to welcome them, to counsel them, to comfort them, to judge their weaknesses charitably, and pity them; but never with proud and oppressive condescensions. A friend more in unmistakable acts than professions, he was always real and reliable; a lover of good men; and given to hospitality.

With his strong mind and cultivation, he might at all times, without arrogance, have assumed commanding position and leadership in the church and be forward in utterance. But his voice was not heard in the streets and in the chief places of concourse. He abstained from clamorous pretension. He waited till call and occasion drew him to conspicuous post and service beyond the sphere of daily labor where he dwelt among his own people. He courted not association with the great, nor sought worldly preëminence. He disdained sycophantic obsequiousness to win the smiles of the wealthy and powerful. He could not crook the pregnant hinges of the knee that thrift might follow fawning. He held no man's person in admiration because of advantage. His prayer was to be kept from the fear of man that bringeth a snare. And thus was he independent in his judgments, firm to his convictions, undaunted for truth and principle; and no mere human expediences could sway or swerve him.

In the courts of the church he spoke but seldom; but al

ways with authority—so wisely and honestly that all listened and trusted his clear, sound speech and discriminating judg, ment.

So honest and incorruptible was he—so prudent, consistent, and Christ-like—that none distrusted his sincerity—and all gave him reverence and respect. A living epistle of the truth, he rendered the religion he taught by his example, amiable, and, if I may use the expression, respectable in the eyes of the world; and with a power beyond the suffrages or testimonies of men, he repelled and withered whatsoever scheme or disposition bold bad men might have manifested at any time to impeach his integrity or calumniate his gospel.

He was faithful to the gospel. He believed it. He loved it. His soul's trust was in the cross of Christ. That cross was the theme of his preaching. Unmindful of the sneers and clamors which would exclude the preaching of *the* gospel as obsolete, and substitute for it their own devices, he felt that the *cross* was Christianity—that Christ alone was the wisdom and power of God unto salvation—that *to save men's souls* was first in importance, and that to heal them was to abate all the ills of life; that all moral and sanitary reform must be the fruit of evangelical regeneration,—and to make the tree good would insure that the fruit should be good also. And he so preached, and with such a purpose, that if perchance there should be among his hearers

one soul that needed to be taught the way of salvation, he should not go away untaught, lest perchance he might never hear it again. It was a maxim of his that "prayers and sermons are not intended for admiration, but to edify;" and if ministers would but keep themselves out of view, and their reputation for learning and eloquence, and simply hold up Christ and His cross, how much more effectively they would preach the gospel and save men.

He was no showy man—in the pulpit, or out of it. He was something better. Without pretension—without ambition of style—solid—clear—instructive—scriptural—he was mighty in the Scriptures—and his eloquence was that which the word of God inspired. It was said of him that his lectures were his best preaching—so thoroughly were they imbued with the Bible—so well expounded—yet so free and unrestrained by scholastic rule, or aim at popularity. In a day of glare and tinsel and self-seeking—all honor to the man who was true to the glorious gospel—who never preached himself—and never pandered to itching ears, and ill-informed, conceited minds and unsanctified hearts.

And thus was he faithful unto death. And now he comes to his grave, as a shock of corn fully ripe that cometh in his season: not worn out, not imbecile; but in the maturity of his powers, his eye hardly dimmed or his natural force abated; still vigorous, untiring, bravely laboring on to the last, even amid

trials and pains. While he laid upon his death-bed, panting and gasping, you might look through the open door into his study, where on his desk was still lying the unfinished sermon arrested by the accession of those complicated diseases which paralyzed his strength and interrupted all his work on earth forever. He had prayed that he might not outlive his usefulness, that he might not be laid aside to become a burden. In this he was exempted—as he was exempted from all the bitterness of death.

But precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. He guards their lives: He watches over their end Precious in His sight is the death of His faithful ministers. He formed their character, and prepared them for their reward. They had fought the good fight; they had finished their course; they had kept the faith; and the crown of righteousness awaits them. Let us not weep and break our hearts because they have entered into rest. Let us be grateful for their godly lives, and pious service, and be followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises. Their death is a legacy to the church and to survivors: it illustrates God's faithfulness to them to the end, in their fidelity to Him, and in their departure in peace and blessed assurance of everlasting life.

Moses is commanded to go up to Nebo and die, just on the threshold of the promised land into which he was leading

Israel. It seemed hard. But he is active; he is submissive; he is willing; and he is favored too. God kisses away his breath —hides his servant from the strife of tongues—hides his sepulchre,—but his memory is blessed forever.

How shall it be with us? Such a command will soon fall on our hearts. Do we keep the fact in view? Are we ready for the summons? Shall it find us still doing the Master's will?

And all of us, beloved, shall have to take this step. Will it be by the side of your faithful ministers, to be their crown and rejoicing in that day? Ah! if it be not so? Have the life and labor of your pastors hitherto been lost upon you? See to it, that you lose not their death also.

REMARKS OF REV. DR. PLUMER.

"And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." Blessed be God, true religion chills none of the kindly feelings of our hearts. Stoicism receives no countenance from Christianity. When we are afflicted, God allows that we may weep. "Jesus wept" at the grave of his friend Lazarus, and we may weep at the graves of our friends too. The enlightened teacher of Christ's religion is too well taught to reprove the mourner. True, indeed, when good men die, we do not weep for the loss they have sustained, but for ourselves. And yet we weep.

The general outlines of the character of the deceased have been well delineated by the brother who preceded me. Repetition would be out of place. But a few additional thoughts may not be untimely.

When the late Dr. Baxter died, his students pointed to the pulpit, and said: "There Baxter wept." When Dr. Payson was gone, one of his people took a stranger into his church, and, pointing to his pulpit, said: "There Payson prayed." Perhaps

the deepest impression made by the public ministrations of Dr. Phillips was through his prayers. Here he stood and prayed. He did not pray at the people, nor to the people; but for the people, and to the Almighty. He was indeed mouth and wisdom to the penitent, the broken-hearted, and the child of sorrow. He came not to the throne of grace to display his gifts, nor to harangue the people through the form of devotion; but to adore the Sovereign of all worlds, to make prostrate obeisance of all his faculties before the God of heaven, to confess and bewail sin, and to plead—oh, with what earnestness and tenderness!—for the life of the souls of men.

There is probably not living a man who ever suspected Dr. Phillips of an envious disposition. If the whole world would act acccording to the tenor of his life, we should begin to think that the Scripture saith in vain: "The spirit that is in us listeth to envy." His heart never sickened at the growing reputation or usefulness of a brother in the ministry, or of any one else. Great, humble man! He rejoiced in the blessing that God granted to the persons and the labors of his fellow servants. Perhaps a more unselfish man did not live in this world. Truly he did not live unto himself. How many here to-day, not resident in this city, have in years gone by been mightily cheered in their labors for Christ's cause by the hearty good will and efficient aid of our dear departed brother!

As a matter of course, Dr. Phillips was remarkably free from unkindness of heart. Nor was his goodness merely negative. His heart overflowed with kindness. For more than a third of a century I have known him well. Under no circumstances have I ever heard from his lips an uncharitable word. Oftentimes has he spoken with respect and affection of those whose deportment had given him great pain. Well did he understand the exhortation of the apostle when he said: "Mind not high things; but condescend to men of low estate." To the poor, pious boy, aiming at the ministry, or to the young, timid probationer for the ministry, he was as affable and as kind as to the aged servant of Christ of high reputation. He wept and prayed and as tenderly sympathized with the poor widow and her fatherless children, as he would with the most honored matron in the land.

The secrets of Dr. Phillips's usefulness and high character were found in his faith and love. He believed God. He believed in God, and in Jesus Christ His Son, and in the blessed Holy Spirit. He endured as seeing Him who is invisible. He walked by faith and not by sight. He was habitually and profoundly assured that every word of God was pure and true, and would be infallibly accomplished. And his faith worked by love. He greatly desired that others should know the mystery of God and of Christ, by which his heart was supported. Never was

he so eloquent as when beseeching men to accept the salvation of the gospel, or beseeching Christians to a large liberality and an enlightened zeal in sending the gospel to the perishing heathen. If he had had even serious faults of character, all but the malignant would agree that the grave should bury them forever. But it is pleasant to be persuaded that there is probably no good man living, who on hearing of his death, felt that he had any thing to erase from the tablet of his memory, in the way of forgiving or forgetting a wrong received from Dr. Phillips.

Under these sad, yet consoling circumstances, we come here to-day to commit to the tomb the mortal remains of our beloved friend. Farewell, thou noble, loving, generous, tender-hearted man! Farewell, till we meet around the throne of God and of the Lamb. Christians never part to meet no more. Nor do any of them leave the world but in answer to the intercession of our great High Priest, one of whose authoritative petitions is: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me: that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

DISCOURSE

ADDRESSED TO THE

Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church,

COMMEMORATIVE OF THEIR LATE PASTOR,

REV. WILLIAM WIRT PHILLIPS, D. D.,

SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 30TH, 1865.

BY

REV. RICHARD W. DICKINSON, D. D.

FUNERAL DISCOURSE

REVELATION xiv, 13.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

This passage of Holy Writ, though so familiar to our ear, is no less impressive than appropriate to this occasion. Emanating from no fallible mind, and recorded on authority, it demands credence. Comprehensive in its relations, as well as clear in its import, even aside from the context, it suggests the weightiest thoughts. Sublime in its disclosures it thrills the soul.

There are voices from the earth respecting the dead; but they are vague, confused, often contradictory; never satisfying the yearnings of our spiritual nature after light and life. Reason has been heard to speak; but however she may have ventured

a presumption on the capacities of the soul, and the signs of material things, she has never attained to the high conclusion that man will live hereafter: much less that in another state of existence, he will be eternally happy. Endued with sublimated energy, or inflated by the achievements of science, she has soared even to empyrean heights; but smitten with blindness, or wearied in her search, she has brought "us back the tidings of despair."

As if conscious of the futility of all the unaided speculations of the human mind, of late years, *mediums* of communication with the departed have been introduced by men affecting a profounder insight of the nature of things; but though a prurient curiosity may be attracted by their mystic rites, and the unthinking may wonder, the phenomena of spiritism serve only to prove how the noblest ideas may be caricatured, and the tenderest sentiments of our nature abused and trifled with.

Turn we then to the grave: ah, that cannot speak. Often has man stood knocking, weeping at the door of the sepulchre; but there was no voice, nor any that answered. All is silence audible around its portals; and within, all is darkness visible As we have hung in anguish over the corpse of some dear friend with whom we had been wont to exchange thought in relation to the nature and issues of death, how often have we

detected in our consciousness the vain wish that those dead lips might open for but an instant, if only to tell us that the spirit lives! Oh! could the sheeted dead, through whatever medium, only whisper to us the secrets of their dark abode! But from the wide-spread realms of death, the gnawing of the earthworm is the only sound that has fallen on the listening ear. Amid the untold myriads that have been driven from the earth before the breath of the destroying angel not one within the wide domain of nature has by any means made known to us his destiny.

The voice of revelation alone has spoken audibly; and its accents are no less clear and certain than authoritative and final.

"I heard a voice from Heaven, saying *unto me:*" It is indeed a man who here speaks; but no man before the Apostle John ever presumed to affirm on the ground of a special revelation to himself as to the final state of the dead. Neither Plato, nor Socrates, whatever might have been their views, ever dreamed of authenticating their conjectures by a reference to heaven's will. Fondly as they cherished virtue, strenuously as they insisted on the formation of virtuous habits in order to the reunion of the soul with Deity, there was always the doubt implied, if not expressed—whether the soul would outlive the body. Even the admirable apostrophe of Tacitus to the spirit of Agricola, than

which nothing can be found amid the ethical remains of antiquity more conclusive as to the degree of light which the wisest of the old heathen enjoyed, begins with a disheartening hypothesis.*

Say not the Apostle labored under an hallucination—the not unfrequent result of too long restricted thought on any subject; or that he might have mistaken the utterances of his own enthusiastic imaginings for a voice from heaven; yea, that confident as *he* might have been, there is no reason why we should suspend our faith on his affirmation—be it ever so positive.

He was one of those chosen Apostles whom God had inspired to record his will; and this appears from the doctrines which he, as well as they, preached; from the principles which they alike exemplified; and from the miracles which they wrought—all in the name of the *Crucified One;* to the miraculous facts of whose history they all bore consistent testimony; and for whose sake they counted not their lives dear unto themselves.

As the prophets of old were gifted with a prescience of future events, so John the Apostle, endowed with "the vision and the

* *If* in another world there is a pious mansion for the blessed; *if*, as the wisest men have thought, the soul is not extinguished with the body, *may* you enjoy a state of eternal felicity."—LIFE OF AGRICOLA, sec. xlvi.

faculty divine," discerned scenes in heaven. As God took Enoch, "for he was not;" as Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire; as Paul was caught up into the third heavens, and "heard unutterable words," so John was made to hear a voice from heaven: and the voice said—Write:

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.

How suitable this closing announcement from heaven by the lips of the oldest and only surviving apostle. Without this, I had almost said, the Bible were deficient in its essential communications.

What more desirable for *us* to know—we who dwell in a vale of tears; and are naturally in bondage to the fear of death, than that there is a world of bliss beyond the grave. Why, for this knowledge, "the whole creation has groaned and travailed in pain together until now."

Sin brought death into the world. But in the councils of eternity, a purpose was formed, a plan devised even by Him against whom man had sinned, to divest death of its sting and the grave of its anticipated victory. Looking back over the inspired records—though the whole plain is darkened by shadows, we discern as on distant mountain tops, the glimpses of immortal light. Amid a succession of typical institutions and events we discern the preparative arrangements for the coming

of Messias. We behold Him to whom every Mosaical rite, and every prophetic song referred—as the light of the world and the hope of immortality, at last appearing in "the form of a servant;" and after a life of toil, privation, and suffering, submitting to the stroke of death but to rise victorious—conqueror forever over death and hell. We see him tendering His overtures of pardon and peace to a lost world; and hear Him declaring with all that authority which became the Son of God: "He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." And now after all essential truth to man's salvation has been recorded; now as the canon of revelation is about to be completed, John, in the closing stage of his apostleship, hears a voice from heaven, saying unto him: "Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth."

As if it were not enough to tell us of "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," God would afford us proof conclusive that the believers in Christ never die. As if it were not enough that Paul himself, though the chiefest Apostle of the Lord should be commissioned by the word of the Lord to say—"I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others who have no hope; for if ye believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him:" God expressly employs a

servant to make a record to this effect: "Blessed are the dead that die in the LORD." They did not believe in one whom I had not sent: they did not entrust their souls to a mere man, nor to any creature: they did not give up all, and labor and toil for Christ in vain—No; "*Blessed* are the dead that die in the Lord."

Write it then, that the world may know that the gospel affords the only stable ground of hope for sinful man. Write it, that the end of the gospel revelation may not be defeated; that so glorious a truth may not be left to be perverted, and ultimately denied through vain tradition. Write it, that believers may be incited to "be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Write it, that unbelievers may know what has become of those who lived and died in Christ. Write it for the comfort and consolation of your guilty, polluted, weeping dying world.

Had the heathen worthies only heard this voice from heaven, how many days of wasting study and nights of anxious thought had they been spared! how had their writings gleamed with the light of truth—their dying hours been cheered by the hope of life eternal! Could but the heathen of our own times be made to *hear* this voice, how might countless precious souls be rescued from the fangs of demon gods!

O tidings of great joy! Be of good cheer, dying mortals!

That there is a blessed future stretching out in endless expanse and duration beyond the grave, is as clear and certain as that "man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever:" a future state of exemption from all evils, and the enjoyment of all good: a place as well as a state where all our faculties will be exalted, refined, and energized in adaptation to its spiritual nature, and holy ends.

But why seek ye the living among the dead? Why go to nature when the God of nature has put into our hand the glass of his Word? Look—that is no mirage—no cloud-land: it is all glorious reality—such as was never seen

"By waking sense nor by the dreaming soul."

'Tis the heaven of the Bible—where God is; where the winged seraphs are; where the spirits of just men made perfect are—all before that golden altar.

Away with the darkly skeptical suggestions of an evil heart. If to the eye of unassisted reason clouds and darkness rest upon the end of man; to the eye of faith "day dawns on the night of the grave." If nature shudders in view of the silence, the corruption, the oblivion of the grave, Faith hears a voice issuing from heaven: "Fear not to go down into the grave; I will go down with you and will bring you up again." "In my Father's

house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go away, I will come again, and take you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." "I am the resurrection and the life." Yea, saith the Spirit, "blessed are the dead that die *in the Lord.*"

Divested of the encumbrances of fallen humanity—purified from sin—ennobled in their powers, they have entered "on the riches of the inheritance of the saints in light." Hark! what strains are those that break upon the ear of listening faith? Loud are they as the sound of many waters; symphonious as the music of the spheres. 'Tis the song of the blessed: *Alleluia; salvation and glory and honor and power unto our God that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

Their blessedness is, in not a few instances, even anticipated by the dying believer. How willing is he to leave a world to which so many cling as their only portion; how willing to surrender his weeping friends into the hands of his covenant-keeping God. How precious is Jesus to his soul. What serenity of trust pervades his parting spirit!

> "Is that a death-bed where the Christian lies;
> No, 'tis not his—'Tis death itself there dies."

Call you this delusion? If so, it is more blessed than any of earth's realities. When I think of the bliss which some believers

have felt while dying, I cannot envy the happiness of the most prospered worldling. Borne on the pinions of faith, as I have winged my way to the mansions of the blessed, earth has dwindled to a point—the world's brightest scenes have been covered as with the pall of darkness.

O the triumphs of faith in the dying hour of many, many a follower of the Lamb! Well and truly has it been said, that could we gather unto one view all the declarations of faith in Jesus, all the gratulations of conscience, all the adoring addresses to the Father of lights, all the admonitions and benedictions to weeping friends, and all the beams of opening glory that have irradiated the dying features of believers, our souls would burn with the sentiment which made the wicked Baalim devout for a moment: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

But, mark you, dear hearers, that blessed future is in reserve only for those who die in the Lord.

If there be a moral government, and moral distinctions are not arbitrary and mutable, the presumption is obtruded on our minds that the Great Regent of the universe will reward only the virtuous subjects of his rule. This was the conclusion of the heathen mind; while the idea of the present as a state of moral trial, necessitates the presumption that future rewards and punishments will be dispensed according to moral character. Con-

science, too, however unwillingly, always bears unerring testimony in favor of the future happiness of the virtuous alone. No wicked man in his moments of solitary reflection—while bending before "the secret confessional of thought"—ever presumes that he will be fit to die until he has at least changed his course of life.

But God's word, while disclosing a future state, has definitively settled the point as to the heirs of future blessedness.

Into that blessed world "there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." It is true that, "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" but they alone will rise to the resurrection of life who are in him "not having their own righteousness." It is true that "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" but it is also written, "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." There is no salvation for fallen man without faith in Christ; and no true faith in him without works; for "with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness." In God's sight actions are not viewed separately from the principles of actions; nor philosophically can any action be regarded as good or bad disjoined from its principle. The inward, absolute ground of all good works, therefore, is faith. Hence, St. Paul affirms

that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Hence, St. James shows, "how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only;" because "faith without works is dead, being alone:" thus alike harmonizing with Christ's own declaration that "the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

"Not every one," then, "that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven." Not every one that dieth is blessed; but only they who die in the Lord: die in His fold—though but in the infancy of their earthly life: die in His cause—whatever their sphere of duty in subservience to that cause; or rather die in vital union with Him: their life in Christ giving them life in death: thus "found in Him," when death—the ending of our day of grace—comes; no matter where, in what way or at what hour it may come.

Consider their conflicts with the depravity of their own hearts, with the tempting interests of the world, with wicked men in their opposition to God and godliness, with the great adversary of souls; their labors in consequence of their own besetting sins, of abounding irreligion, of lurking dangers, and obtruding fears; their labors in much weakness, in sickness, and

sorrow, and death:—from all these they have rested. Consider their works: how they wept over their sins, and strove after personal purity; how they searched their hearts, and guarded their words and actions; how they wrestled in prayer, and fought the good fight of faith; how they sought to know the mind and will of God, and observed to improve His providences; how they shunned the haunts and ways of the world, and honored God's sabbaths and ordinances; how they conducted their secular business in the fear of God, and employed their talents to His glory, and regarded themselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth; how carefully they sought the way of duty whatever their calling or station in life; how they instructed and disciplined their households; how they distributed to the needy, and carried balm to the aching heart; how they aimed to teach the ignorant and reclaim the wandering and reform the vicious; to "strengthen the stakes and lengthen the cords of Zion;" to hold forth the word of life, and in every appropriate way to diffuse the knowledge of the "great salvation."

All these works, imperfect indeed, and not to be even mentioned as reasons for their being saved, have followed them to the bar of God as so many loving, faithful witnesses of their faith in Christ; and that they "held fast the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end."

Happy they, who, when conducted by angels to "the pure

river of the water of life which clear as crystal proceedeth out of the throne of God and the Lamb," will be able to reflect that so long as they were in the world, they aimed to promote God's glory! Thrice happy they who are followed there by souls converted to Christ through their humble instrumentality!

It were inferrible from the words of the text, that the dogma of "universal salvation" is not from heaven; that after death there is no place of temporary suffering in preparative purification for heaven; that the soul does not sleep until the resurrection; and that the rewards of heaven may be proportioned to our works. But more practical inferences will engage our concluding reflections.

If then such is the blessedness of those who die in the Lord, how dark, how malign the heart that would abolish Christianity. Our nature, though fallen, still pants after future bliss. All nations have entertained some faint idea that Paradise might be regained. Hence the credibility of the discoveries of the gospel. Nowhere else can we find any intelligible glimpses of future existence; through no other medium discern the path of life. Does not virtue in her natural yearnings look forward to another and a better world? In the absence of revelation, has not this hope been her only solace when suffering under neglect and scorn, or exposed to violence? Now tell the sons and daughters

of toiling, suffering, sorrowing humanity—tell them—as you *surely may* on the authority of high heaven; that if they are only united by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered and died for them, they shall at last enter into a blessed rest, and joy springs up in every heart. But infidelity would leave them to grapple with their fate; or turn away with no piteous ear for the cry of their despair.

As I stand by the grave of buried love, shall I be told that there is no reunion with the loved and lost on earth? When stretched upon my own death couch, mine eye looking out for the last time upon the beauteous scenes of earth, and my poor soul relieved from its throes of anguish only by the hope of a blessed future, shall I be told that the idea of heaven is a weak, sickly illusion? Wretched men! to what would they reduce us? Ah, my brethren, were it possible, they would break up your peace with God, and render you like themselves the enemies of God and man.

With how strong a reason are we furnished by the text, to hope respecting those who were not permitted by either the suddenness of their summons, or the nature of their disease to give their dying testimony to the value of the faith they had professed.

We are wont to anticipate something of the kind, especially in the case of devoted Christians. To see a dying man triumphing over the fear of death, and the pains of dissolution is a

phenomenon almost inexplicable to the worldly mind. To gather around the bed of a dear friend; and as sweet voices from heaven are calling him away—to hear him telling us of God and Jesus, and that world of light whither he is hastening: as it were stopping for a moment to bid us stay our tears—to commend us to His heavenly Father, and serenely take of us a last and long adieu—'tis most consoling as well as tenderly affecting.

But there is at times a strange lighting up of the faculties as the soul is about to part with the body: a brilliancy of conception and depth of sentiment far from natural to the former man; and which may philosophically be viewed as the blending result of entire abstraction from sensible objects, and the mysterious influences which are at work during the incipient process of dissolution. On this account I would rather see one during his life praising God, than praising him only when he comes to die. Perhaps it requires more grace to live well than to die well. But if the life has given evidence of regenerated affections, though the hours of the sick and dying man may be clouded—his spirit enters into heaven's rest. Enoch gave no dying testimony. "He was not, for God took him;" and it would seem that one reason for this supernatural exemption from death was to show the prevalent value of a life of faith. Whitefield said that he should give his testimony during the days of health; and it is remarkable that his lips were sealed from the time he was taken sick.

Such instances—and to these might be added the cases of no less than four of our eminent divines but recently deceased;—may assure us that there is no reason to doubt the salvation of our pious friends, though they spoke not on their death-bed to tell us of their pardon and anticipated bliss.

The declaration of the Holy Spirit in the text, throws a shadow over the future condition of mere nominal Christians. If heaven be a rest for the self-denying followers of the Lord Jesus, how can they be the heirs of heaven who, while confessing Christ, are living to "the world, with its affections and lusts." Is a spiritual, holy world the appropriate place for resting from the anxious pursuit of riches, and the panting course of selfish ambition? From what labors then shall these rest?—from conflicts with evil desires and outward temptations? They have yielded to their heart's lusts, and settled down amid the gathered comforts of sensual ease: as if this were their rest, and no world of spiritual enjoyment ever allured them to its high and holy abodes.

What works shall follow them? *They* never denied themselves for the sake of Christ; they went not about doing good; they esteemed it not their meat to do the will of their heavenly Father. No one, it may be, is the wiser or the better for their having lived. *Perhaps*, some may be the worse for *their* having confessed Christ before men; through their example may have persisted in their own worldliness—their inconsistencies, hardened

themselves in unbelief! Ah, yes; their works too shall follow them; but it will be, not as evidences of their faith unfeigned, but their insincerity unveiled; not to witness in mitigation of their sentence, but to testify to the justice of their doom. Brethren, forget not that this is not your rest. Give all diligence to the work of the Lord, that you may make "your calling and election sure" unto yourselves and others.

If they who die in the Lord are blessed because they rest from their labors, and are followed by their works, how unsafe is it to postpone the work of repentance and faith to a dying hour.

Never can I forget the case of the penitent thief; and therefore cannot refrain from saying to the dying sinner—"Do not despair, *if* you are penitent and do indeed believe;" but sure am I that it is awfully dangerous to defer this weighty matter between God and the soul. I tell you the hour of death is not the time for preparation. If the ever blessed Spirit of God may not have been grieved from your heart by oft-repeated repulses—consider! You may be seized with a fever, and your mind will wander away from God and eternity. Reason may desert her throne from the moment you are laid on that death-bed, and then farewell to your poor soul! Your symptoms may be aggravated by the least excitement; and even your dearest friend will not dare to tell you, though in the softest tones—that you are going

to die. You may be suddenly arrested in your career of worldliness, and *die* "and make no sign."

Under the most favorable circumstances your mind will sympathize with the feebleness of your dying body; and who shall say that anything can be done for your soul; much less that at that late hour you will be able to find a "hook to hang a hope on" for eternity.

In such an hour—amid the solemnities of exchanging worlds—even the believer needs something else to rest on than mere feeling. If he would have peace and joy in believing, he must look back, not to rest on works, but that works may tell him where he has rested his immortal soul. How unutterably important, then, immediate repentance "towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." A voice from the Scriptures says—"By their fruits ye shall know them." A voice from death-beds cries—"Work while it is called to-day." A voice from heaven responds—"Yea, that they may rest from their labors."

If such then be the blessedness of those who die in the Lord, what must be the condition of those who die out of Christ. In proportion to the happiness of the former is the misery of the latter. As are the self-gratulations of the one, so the self-reproaches of the other. As the one looks forward without fear, knowing *whom* he believed, so the other, without hope, knowing whom he had rejected. As the one rises in bliss and glory, so

the other sinks in shame and woe. All tears are wiped from the eyes of the one: his heart beats with love; his lips are vocal with praise; his countenance is radiant with joy. No cares can ever disquiet him, no sorrows depress, no evils annoy, no dangers alarm. All there is peace;—not to be fully imaged by the hushed winds pillowed on the bosom of the waveless deep: all is rest, such as was never enjoyed by the tempest-tossed mariner when safely moored in quiet waters; or the wearied husbandman at summer's twilight hour. All is joy—"fullness of joy,"—such as never "entered into the heart of man."

Thus blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord: unutterably, uninterruptedly forever blessed; and while a voice from heaven proclaims it, the church on earth takes up the heaven-sent message, and responds—"The souls of believers at death do immediately enter into glory."

But the condition of those who die out of Christ, ah, how dreadful! No rest day nor night from the remembrance of a Saviour neglected, the Spirit grieved—God dishonored; no rest while eternity rolls on from the action of guilty passions—from the gnawings of the deathless, insatiate worm. Followed by *their* works, their unbelief and impenitence, their hatred and malice, their dishonesty and uncleanness, their oaths and blasphemies, their desecrated sabbaths, their deserted altars, their despised warnings, their vain boastings—all these rise and pass

before their frenzied sight in endless succession: their *sins*—their sins—each hissing with the tongue of an adder and biting with the fangs of a scorpion.

To die out of Christ? who can conceive the misery of that soul? Ah! could but a whisper from that dark world be heard, how would all *flee to Christ*, if so be that they might *escape the damnation of hell!*

But I may no longer dwell on this passage of Holy Writ. Perhaps no one among his contemporaries inculcated the great principles which it implies more with decision of emphasis than William W. Phillips, D. D., *late pastor of this church.* Having embraced the faith in Christ on the credit of revelation; having been called, as he humbly trusted, of God, to the work of the gospel ministry, and conscientiously respecting the solemn vow which he had taken when set apart to this work "with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," it was the aim of his ministerial life to save souls from going down to a Christless grave; to lead those within the range of his influence so to live that they might die in the Lord: yea, to bring sinful, guilty, dying men to Christ that they might be justified by faith; and on the day of final account be "found in Christ, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

To this end—lest he should deceive himself with a false hope, or lose his first love, and thus be tempted to make the ministry a mere profession—he took great heed to himself as well as to his doctrine:—forming the habit of retired devotion; cherishing sentiments of love to God and love for souls; scrutinizing his heart that he might not preach without a true experience of the power of truth; regulating his life according to the precepts of the gospel, that he might be "an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity;" realizing his own responsibility and constant needs "lest while he preached to others, he himself should be a castaway."

To this end, he kept an eye to all the providences of God: accustoming himself to recognize God's hand in all the events of life, as designed to test our love and willing obedience no less by success than by disappointment; by mercies, than by trials: believing as he did that God, in order to purify his people, sometimes suffers them to be tried as by fire.

To this end also he made the Scriptures his prayerful study, that he might be rooted and grounded in "the truth as it is in Jesus;" and "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Hence his remarkable familiarity with Scripture as evinced by his sermons and prayers; so note-worthy in his tender interviews with the sick and with the afflicted, as well as in those expositions of God's

Word to which he attached so much importance, and in which he excelled.

Hence, from his knowledge of the Scriptures, he regarded the Lord Jesus Christ in his several offices as the sum and substance of God's revelation of his mind and will to a darkened and alienated world: Christ the *Revealer*, Christ the *Exemplar*, Christ the *Redeemer* of God's elect, Christ the *Intercessor*, Christ, exalted to be head over all things to His church: thus ever honoring the Son even as the Father; and thus in keeping with the great end of his ministry which he "had received from the Lord Jesus," he taught the indispensable necessity of faith in Christ, and "affirmed constantly that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

Any view that tended to divert attention from the Bible as "the only infallible rule of faith and practice;"—to exalt reason to the disparagement of God's written Word; to inflate depravity with the delusive idea of self-regeneration; to supersede the necessity of faith by a selfish morality; to bring down the Lord of glory to the level of a mere man; to set aside the doctrines of grace for the speculative conclusions of the unassisted mind; to put the church in the place of her adorable Head; to transmute the symbols of His sacrificial death into his literal body and blood; or impute their efficacy to consecrated hands; in short, any human opinion, any ghostly device, or ceremonial observance that tended to invalidate the claims of God's holy Word, pervert its

teachings, and degrade the glorious gospel of the blessed God—thus perilling immortal souls!—he withstood, and on occasions in unmistakable terms of reprehension and solemn warning. As if Paul, the great champion of the Christian doctrines, had exclaimed—"Oh foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you."

Strict in his adherence to the doctrinal standards of the church, as well as decided in his ecclesiastical affinities, he was no less Scriptural in his views in relation to all measures for advancing the cause of Christ: discriminating between man's work, and the work of the Holy Spirit with hardly less precision than between the traditions of the Pharisees and the principles of the gospel. Averse to uncommanded days, he exalted the authority of the Sabbath, and kept within the limits of the divinely appointed ordinances of God's house. Though distrustful of sudden excitements, he failed not to perceive the necessity of earnest self-denying effort and prayerful activity in the church.

While magnifying his office, he was little in his own estimation. Recognizing with thankfulness that diversity of gifts which characterizes the ministry, he was never backward to give credit to any, however brilliant their talents, or varied their acquirements, so long as they preached not themselves or their 'isms; nor to fraternize with any so long as he was not required to

compromise some essential principle. While regular in the discharge of his pulpit duties, he was not unmindful of all that appertained to the interests of the church: her courts which he attended with conscientious promptness and strict attention to business, and over the highest of which he once presided; her Boards which he warmly commended and habitually aided; her missions—especially her foreign missions, which enlisted at regular times his prayerful attention—having been from the organization of the Board here in 1837, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and of late years, President of the Board; and though last, not to be overlooked in an estimate of his usefulness, his interest in the diffusion of a sound religious literature, and in the cause both of collegiate and theological training: he having occupied the seat in the Board of Publication vacated by the death of the late Dr. Archibald Alexander; and been both a trustee and director and President of the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey. Nor was his attention limited to these. He was a member of the Council of the New York University; and a trustee of Nassau Hall. By the terms of their respective foundation, he was *ex-officio*, a trustee of "the Leake and Watts' Orphan Asylum," and of "the Sailor's Snug Harbor."

It is unnecessary to retrace his course from April, 1818, when having completed his studies under the care of the late Dr. John M. Mason, he was ordained and installed pastor of the late

Pearl Street Church, where he labored with great acceptance and marked success for eight years; and from which he was called to the First Presbyterian Church, then worshipping in Wall Street, but afterwards removed to this site on Fifth Avenue. It will be perceived at a glance, that though his labors were seemingly circumscribed to this church, of which he was pastor for thirty-nine years, they embraced the cause of literature and science as well as the interests of Christianity at home and abroad; of enlightened Christian charity as well as the concerns of personal religion.

These various offices of trust were in God's providence imposed upon him; not sought by him. In all other public relations he would willingly have given place to those whom he esteemed more competent than himself to effective influence; but in relation to the work of the ministry, that he conceived to be especially incumbent on his time and talents. Far from over-weening, he knew what, by God's grace, he could do, and did it, punctually, faithfully—to the extent of his ability in the various spheres of duty in which he was placed, with a clear mind, a sound judgment, and a true heart.

And though others may have been less technical in their forms, more varied in their topics, or more attractive in style and manner, yet no one entered the pulpit under a profounder conviction of the truth of his message, or led the devotions of the sanctuary under a deeper sense of the Divine presence:

the secret, it may be, of his marked spirituality and power in prayer.

His heart was in the ministry, beating in unison with its claims, its needs, its duties, its trials, its responsibilities, its appropriate influence; and longing for its crowns of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. Hence, his interest in youthful ministers, as well as pity for those among his brethren who might have been wronged, or were struggling with difficulties; his tears over the grave of youthful promise; his words of encouragement to the young communicant; his joy over the returning prodigal; his tender remembrance of the far distant missionary; his lamentations over the dark places of the earth, so full of the habitations of cruelty; his concern for those who are living at home in the neglect of their privileges; his sympathy with the troubled and tried; his prayers so Scripturally appropriate by the bedside of the sick and the dying.

A true servant of the cross—in full sympathy with all who love the Lord Jesus, and with all Scriptural means to extend his kingdom, his field was the world; yet though conspicuously devoted to the cause of foreign missions, he overlooked not the spiritual waste places of his own land; nor the perils to which she is exposed from the stealthy approaches of the man of sin, on the one hand, and the ascendancy of godless politics on the other. A heart so true to her spiritual interests as well as her civil and

religious rights, could not have been false to his own civil obligation in the hour of her fiery trial—no matter who might dissent from his Scriptural conclusions, or turn away from his ministrations.

Trials, he indeed had—such as no one can hardly expect to avoid who will preach the plain truth of God's Word, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear: trials too, from which even such men of God as Baxter and Payson, were not exempt; but they were sanctified trials, and while "committing himself to Him who judgeth righteously," in his case the inspired declaration was illustriously verified: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you."

Having thus spoken of Dr. Phillips, as a minister, I need not speak of him in his intercourse with his people, or with society; much less in his domestic relations: so courteous was he, and withal dignified; grave without austerity; firm, but kind; patient, though determined; retiring, yet unselfish; listening well, rather than talking much; thankful for any favor; ready to befriend. Those who knew him best only respected him the more, as they who were bound to him in the tenderest of human ties, loved him the more; but not with a purer sentiment of esteem than they—whether rich or poor—(the highest tribute that can be paid to an aged pastor)—who had sat the longest under his

ministry. I may not speak of his loss to them—those elders who in so long holding up his hands, now feel only the more their own needs; those aged communicants who had fondly hoped that he would be spared to minister to their own dying hour: much less of his loss to his numerous family. I can only commend them to the merciful kindness of the God of all grace and consolation; and gently tell them not to weep; but rather *bless God* that he was spared to them through so many years—making theirs, under God's kind providence, *a happy home;* and that he was taken away at the right time, in the right place, in the right way.

Though disease was rapidly sapping his bodily strength, yet retaining his intellectual vigor, and growing in grace, he worked on in his accustomed method: preaching when most ministers would have procured a supply; experiencing in his pulpit a degree of relief from pain which was denied to him at home; enjoying the services of the sanctuary with increasing spiritual delight; providing for his pulpit when finally unable to leave his room; during his brief intervals of physical relief, writing his last sermon, though he knew it not.

On the desk of his study lay that unfinished manuscript from the significant text: "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease; though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground. * * * But man dieth and

wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and *where* is he?"

It was in the room adjoining his study that, notwithstanding his extreme feebleness and incessant bodily pain, he met the session of his church, opened the meeting with a most touchingly appropriate prayer—after having calmly replied to the solicitous inquiry of his elders respecting his health: "If it should please God to spare my life a little longer, I shall gratefully accept the mercy; if not, I trust that grace will be given me to meet my latter end."

Some faint hopes were entertained of his recovery; but the third day after this meeting of session—while his people were gathered round the communion table, and he himself, though absent in person, was communing with them in spirit, and with his blessed Lord in private—a sudden change in his disease "foretold the ending of mortality."

He had borne his suffering without a murmur; he had contemplated the probability of his approaching end with the even serenity of trust; he died without being able to tell us whither he was going: but he has rested from his labors and his works do follow him.

As I look back this day upon his ministry, I am impressively reminded of those who preceded him in the pastorate of this church—the venerable Rodgers, the circumspect and erudite Miller, the beloved Whelpley—so early ripe for heaven; min-

isters whose memory is still fragrant in the churches; and those elders, too, who supported this church from its earliest organization; held fast the form of sound words, and died in the Lord.

How many cherished names has this church recorded; how many solemn vows have here been made; how many baptismal seals of the covenant have here been set; how many sacramental seasons enjoyed; how many have gone forth thence to various spheres of usefulness, even to the ends of the earth—carrying with them the glad tidings of great joy; how various the influences for man's good and God's glory which have emanated from this pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church in this city; and how many—some near and dear to us—and who but lately joined in the devotions of this sanctuary, have died in the Lord, and gone to be forever with the Lord. "*Precious* in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." How glorious will be our departed brother's meeting with those whom he had instrumentally won to Christ, and directed on their heavenward way. How blessed the communion of the saints in glory! How delightful the renewed intercourse of those who once took sweet counsel together and walked to the house of God in company—to meet—to meet where there will be no parting—those who have sat with us at the table of Jesus, and partaken of the same cup of blessing! to join the innumerable company of angels, and

the church of the first-born—to be forever in this blessed company, and quenching our thirst in the rivers of pleasure which flow fast by the throne of God and the Lamb.

O! could your late beloved pastor but speak to us from that heavenly world, with what glowing accents of affection would he say—"Weep not for me. My Beloved is mine, and I am His. I am saved through free grace. I have rested from my feeble labors, and my works, though not worth speaking of on earth, have in remembrance followed me, and in testimony spoken for me. But could I have had any adequate conception of the glory to be revealed, how would I have loved and lived! how zealous for God's glory in the salvation of dying sinners—the triumphs of redeeming love!"

But we cannot hear his voice: it is blended with the voices of all those out of every nation and people, and kindred and tongue, who before the throne, and hard by "the sea of glass" now sing the new song, and will forever ascribe salvation unto the Lamb.

But we have heard a voice from heaven—(oh that it might sound in our ear until every saint shall awake to righteousnesss, and every saint gird himself anew for the work of faith)! for the voice has said—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit—(ratifying what we have heard;) that they may rest from their labors."

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OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

May 1st, 1865.

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